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UNCLAS HANOI 000347

SIPDIS

FOR CA/OCS/ACS/EAP; EAP/EX; EAP/BCLTV  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, AID (TDOLAN)  
STATE PASS HHS  
USDA FOR FAS/PASS TO APHIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [TBIO](#) [VM](#) [AFLU](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM - AVIAN FLU (AI) UPDATE #10

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CURRENT STATUS  
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11. (U) THE WHO INVESTIGATIVE TEAM INDICATES THAT TYPE SPECIFIC LABORATORY TESTS HAVE CONFIRMED THE TWO NEW CASES OF H5 INFLUENZA IN HUMANS, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HUMAN CASES IN VIETNAM TO 18 (13 OF WHOM HAVE DIED). THESE TWO NEW CASES WERE HOSPITALIZED IN HCMC, AND INCLUDE A 6 YEAR-OLD BOY AND AN ADULT CASE.

12. (U) HOSPITALS ARE REPORTING CRITICAL SHORTAGES OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR MEDICAL PERSONNEL. SHORTAGES OF PPE CONTINUE AMONG CULLERS AND OTHERS WHO HANDLE POTENTIALLY INFECTED BIRDS.

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PIGS  
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13. (U) Despite initial press reports of evidence of large-scale influenza infection in pigs/swine in Vietnam, there is still no laboratory or other evidence whatsoever that this is the case. Subsequent press reports by FAO Rome, WHO, and the Vietnam government have been consistent in stating that these press reports were in error. While surveillance of pigs continues, there is no evidence that pigs are currently a reservoir for this virus. Recently, results from a large series of samples from pigs in affected provinces tested outside of Vietnam found no evidence of influenza.

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HUMAN-TO-HUMAN  
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14. (U) INVESTIGATION HAS CONTINUED ON THE QUESTION OF HUMAN-TO-HUMAN TRANSMISSION IN THE THAI BINH PROVINCE FAMILY CLUSTER. LABORATORY TESTS (PCR) APPARENTLY INDICATE THAT THE TWO SISTERS IN THAT CLUSTER WERE BOTH INFECTED WITH THE SAME STRAIN OF H5N1 FOUND IN POULTRY IN VIETNAM -- PERHAPS STRENGTHENING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT INFLUENZA IN THESE YOUNG WOMEN MAY HAVE INDEED BEEN SPREAD FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER, BUT RULING OUT MUTATION OR MIXING OF THE VIRUS TO FACILITATE THAT TRANSMISSION. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT PERSON-TO-PERSON SPREAD CAN EVER BE DEFINITELY CONFIRMED IN THIS CLUSTER.

15. (U) ADDITIONAL TESTING BASED ON EARLY VIETNAMESE SAMPLES CONTINUES IN SEVERAL LABORATORIES TO ASSESS EVIDENCE FOR ANY MUTATION OR MIXING OF THE CURRENT H5 AVIAN VIRUS THAT COULD REPRESENT A NEW FLU STRAIN THAT CAN BE EASILY TRANSMITTED AMONG HUMANS. DISCUSSIONS INDICATE THAT THUS FAR, NO EVIDENCE OF MUTATION OR MIXING HAS BEEN FOUND.  
BURGHARDT